

## Citizens Advisory Committee Strong Mayor Form of Governance

Date: April 11, 2005  
Attention: Mayor, Council Members, and Members of the Public  
Subject: Transition Planning and Implementation

We are happy to report that the appointments you made to the Citizens Advisory Committee have resulted in an excellent working group. What is most remarkable is that every one of us has the same goal – to ensure that by the turn of the new year there will be a cohesive, independent, and strong city council, ready to assume its legislative responsibilities under our new form of government.

This is our first report to you, the city council, and also to members of the public who have not yet been able to participate in our open meetings. Our report will address three issues that the committee agreed must be brought to your attention at this stage in the transition process.

The first issue can be summarized in one word: **Urgency**. One of the CAC's early projects was to categorize and attempt to prioritize the wide range of city council transition tasks necessitated by Prop F. We matched the list of required council actions against the 2005 legislative calendar and generated a timeline. It became instantly clear to all members of the CAC that the city council would *not* be ready to function in the way San Diego voters anticipated when they endorsed Prop F -- unless we shift gears immediately.

For example, there's a critical need for a credible and comprehensive transition timeline of tasks that must be completed in a short period of time by our eight council members. And an equally critical need for a series of deadlines to monitor progress and keep track of the "big picture."

The CAC has already forwarded the informal timeline projections we have developed to the Dewey Square Group, and we strongly recommend that you direct the consultant team to come back to you next week, at the April 18th council hearing, with an authoritative schedule and proposed deadlines. Since our evaluation indicates that the transition process is already behind schedule, there is no time for delay. We recommend an accelerated, multi-tasking approach rather than a linear process that tackles transition tasks one at a time.

Anticipating that the consultants' findings will concur with ours, we also recommend that you schedule additional times and opportunities for transition-related hearings. Contrary to popular wisdom, most transition tasks have to be scheduled many months in advance of the year's end to fulfill legal requirements for public discussion, decision-making, preparation of enabling ordinances, and their final adoption.

Given that there is always a full docket of regular city business at scheduled council meetings, we suggest that time be carved out by modifying the length of legislative recess throughout the next seven months, and also that you consider the value of setting aside a portion of council committee meetings for public workshops on transition items.

Our second issue focuses on the **Independent Budget Analyst**. When you begin your work as an eight-member city council, your legislative success will hinge on the adequacy, impartiality, and quality of the information you receive about city business.

The Dewey Square Group has provided an excellent set of recommendations for you to consider. One of their most astute observations is that independent *legislative* analysis is equally as essential as budget analysis for all council deliberations. In the new year, the council will have full responsibility for all land use decisions as well as the responsibility for making financial decisions. Uppermost in our minds is the fact that, come the new year, the city manager will no longer provide back-up reports, analyses, or recommendations to the city council – resources that the public as well as council members always depended upon.

The public and the council have the need and the right to unbiased, independent public reports to enable intelligent decision-making, which is why the CAC concurs with the consultants' strong message that it is critical for the city council to create an Office of Legislative Analysis at the same time you create an office of Independent Budget Analyst. The CAC feels that Dewey Square's proposal for an Office of Analysis, with separate branches for legislative and budget work, makes the most sense.

At this moment we cannot endorse the consultants' specific staffing estimates, since by comparison with similar cities they seem too nominal. There must be equitable distribution of staff resources to ensure a balanced government system. That means that we need baseline information about the staff and resources historically employed in San Diego by the city manager to handle the city's legislative responsibilities. We also need information about the impact on the budget of the mayor's staffing needs, as well as the projected impact of managerial backup to the executive branch. This information should be made public as soon as possible. The CAC urges you not to shortchange or underestimate the importance of this Office of Analysis.

In addition, CAC members, as well as members of the public who attended our meetings, stress the need for openness, transparency, and public participation through these new analysis offices. We expect that they will play a valuable role in bringing forward constructive reforms to the city's budgeting and legislative processes.

The final issue in today's CAC report takes a quick look at the **bigger picture**. We have already recommended the creation of an official timeline and set of deadlines to keep you on track and keep the process accountable to the public during this year of transition.

We also need to create a revised "City Organizational Structure" chart to be posted on the city's website to clearly lay out the structure of our new Strong Mayor government. This is important for the public and would be very helpful to all of us working to complete the transition. The CAC has already created a preliminary chart of the new government structure as a useful guide for our committee discussions.

Here is a short list of CAC concerns regarding the bigger picture:

\* Since Prop F was mandated by the public without consideration of fiscal impacts, the CAC is especially aware of the dilemma posed by the city's budget crisis vis-a-vis allocation of new funding for the legislative branch. Duplication of services is an unavoidable consequence of Prop F. Only through equitable prioritizing and redistribution of resources can we minimize the impact of budgetary constraints.

\* In addition to the aforementioned legislative and budget analyst staff, the new budget must also provide for additional staffing needs of the council's presiding officer, for committee restructuring, and for the overlooked necessity of hiring planning analysts to assist in council's exclusive role in land-use matters.

\* When the discussion begins about council's new position of presiding officer, it must address the balance between fair treatment for all council districts with the need for strong leadership on behalf of the entire council;

\* The CAC has strong concerns about the responsibility for constituent services to neighborhoods and communities. What we see on our organizational chart does not encourage us about adequate public accountability.

\* The CAC would like to begin formal meetings with city council staff members so that we can cooperate and assist the council with any of the tasks we have described or with new ones, as they come up. We will need guidelines from the city attorney to ensure compliance with the Brown Act.

We will end this report with two blunt observations. First, the city council could become an independent body in name only if it delays taking control over organizing and dictating the implementation of required transition tasks. Second, the CAC is acutely aware that public access to elected council members will be valuable only if the council has enough power and clout to be able to respond to their constituents. Without a strong council we will have a marginalized public, and that is an unacceptable option for the people of San Diego.

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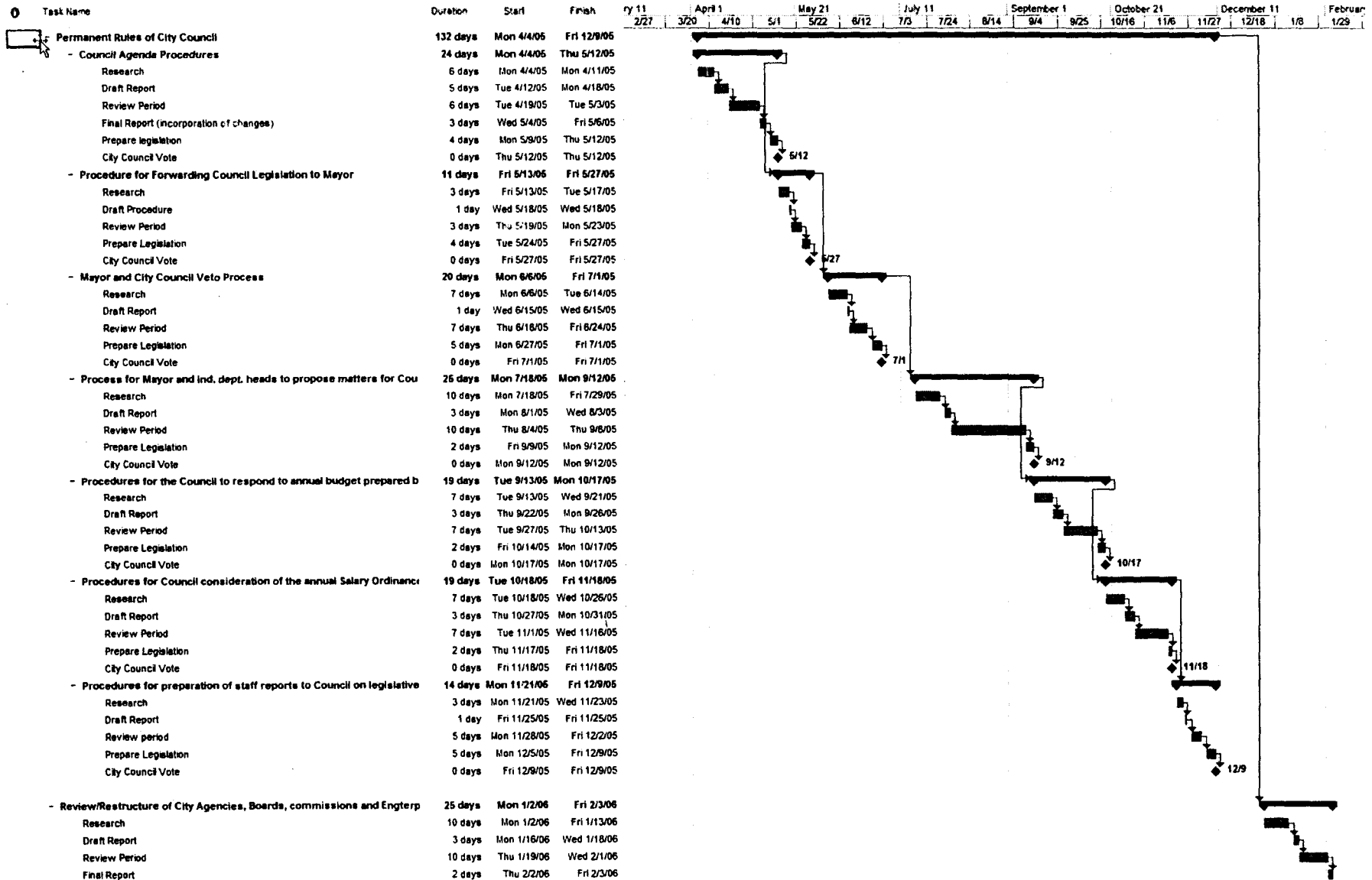
# Our Concern

- In order for the will of the people expressed by the passage of Proposition F to become a reality, a number of changes to the Municipal Code are required.
- The process of changing the Municipal Code does not lend itself to haste
- There is currently no plan in place to assure that all required changes are in place by January 1, 2006

# A Notional Schedule

- The schedule presented is intended to depict that if the process of changing the Municipal Code is carried out on each item serially only a few days is available for each item
- Clearly an alternative approach is necessary

# Notional City Council Transition Schedule



# Problems With the Schedule

- The task list is ***not*** exhaustive
- The tasks are ***not*** prioritized
- Time allocations are guesses
- While legislative recesses are included, the council Docket is not considered
- ***Therefore***
  - There must be a prioritized exhaustive list of required policy changes
  - These must be processed in parallel in a manner that assures on-time completion
  - There must be a schedule with milestones by which to measure progress



# Recommendations

- Assign the task of developing an exhaustive list of Municipal Code Changes to a consultant such as Dewey Square
  - Request assistance from City Attorney's Office
- Approve a final prioritized list not later than 1 May
- Each Council Office would then take on the task of formulating draft policy on several items
  - This could alternatively be done by a consultant
- Alternatively the items could be apportioned among the Council Committees
- Final Policy approved at Council meetings
- The key is that the items ***must*** be processed in parallel rather than one or two at a time

# Recommendations (cont'd)

- Approved policies are passed to the City Attorney's Office
- The City Attorney expeditiously drafts changes to the Municipal Code and puts the items on the City Council Docket
- The normal process for Municipal Code Changes ensues

# City Organizational Structure

